

Feast of Roses

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GIFT OF
Prof. M. G. Brumbaugh



ROSE DAY ADDRESS

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TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE

FEAST OF ROSES.

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BY

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ROSE DAY ADDRESS.

Pennsylvania has a colonial history as redolent as a rose. Around the camp-fire and the hearth-stone and the assembly hall cluster memories as poetical as a dream, as valiant as the chivalry of mediaevalism, and as pious as the life of its founder, William Penn.

To his province, attracted, no doubt, by his peace principles and the promise of happy homes, came sturdy sons of Scotia, Holland, Wales, Switzerland, Germany and other European nations. No colony on the Atlantic coast could boast as complex a life as Pennsylvania. Across the Atlantic from a score of lands swept the steady stream of pious pioneers. I say pious advisedly, for Pennsylvania was a religious colony. Her people were devout, her pioneer life, considering its characteristics, was intensely religious. The surface-irritation of history has stigmatized some of these pioneers as Godless; because, forsooth, they did not at once erect houses of worship and organize religious communities. They forgot that the sect-spirit was indelibly stamped upon these people by European persecutions, and that many of them had been so long priest-oppressed that they took their German Bible under their arms, marched out of all organized churches, and lived a family religion as devoutly and as faithfully as the more homogeneous colonies maintained churches and clergy.

Let us glance briefly at the leading forces that were active in the colony. Describe a circumference, with a radius of twenty-five miles, around Phila-

adelphia, and you will have enclosed the Quaker Belt. Here in Southeastern Pennsylvania the Quaker engaged largely in foreign trade and in industrial pursuits held sway. From the same centre, with a radius three times as great, describe another circumference. This second zone is the home of the Pennsylvania Dutch, the Palatine Germans, who sailed from Rotterdam for Philadelphia. Beyond this, on the frontier, lived the sturdy Scotch-Irish, many of whom landed at New Castle, and pushed west along the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, dotting their course with at least four colleges and twice as many churches, and training their sons by the hardships of frontier life for heroic service in the State.

But the Germans of the Schuylkill Valley and of the great Piedmont Plateau region generally are to us on this occasion of special interest. They came to the province as the result of the missionary journeys of William Penn, and of the economic good so skillfully presented to them by Penn's agents. Among these Germans at least three groups are significant.

(1) The quietist sects, including the Mennonites, the Kelpianites, the Taufers, the Ephrataites, the Schwenkfelders, and the allied groups of devout, and, for the most part, non-resisting, Christians. To them homes in the fertile limestone valleys became the dominant quest, and these they acquired honestly and these they have steadily held to the present time.

(2) The Moravians, who settled on the Lecha, or Lehigh river, and developed a community life singularly devoted to the welfare of the poorest among their number. These Germans were the Protestant missionaries of colonial America. From Connecticut to Georgia, and westward to the great river, these pious missionaries gath-

ered around the council-fire and the wigwam to teach the Indian to burn his bows and his arrows, and to live a quiet life of trust and peace. ➤

(3) The Lutherans and the Reformed, the earnest, aggressive Germans, whose love for liberty and devotion to principle made them potent in the councils of the colony and in the field of strife.

Situated midway between the proprietary and the frontier, they held the balance of power, and, by their industry and thrift, made the colony unusually prosperous. From their number sprang men of sterling worth, whose influence is felt and recognized in every activity of the Commonwealth they so largely helped to build.

Lancaster county was the storm-center of the religious activity of the colony. The incoming German, moving up the Schuylkill valley, was deflected to the south by the mountain fastnesses, and filled the valleys of Lancaster. The Quaker, in his expansion westward, also touched this territory. The Scotch-Irish possessed the southern part of the county, and made Lancaster a base of activities to the west. Here, then, was the region of creeds and of nationalities. In the evolution of this complex life the German was easily master. He has practically made the region his own. He has possessed the land and absorbed and unified the social, religious and industrial life of the region.

Among the many characters whose influence is indelibly stamped upon the community, no one is more clearly outlined, none is more justly venerated, than the distinguished Baron William Steigel.

I. He was a German. This is significant. He was one of above 30,000 countrymen who were attracted to colonial Pennsylvania. But his coming in 1750, August 31, was more momen-

tous than the coming of all the others who crowded the ship Nancy for the voyage. He did not come, as did most of his countrymen, to break down the wilderness and to build up an agricultural democracy. He came as an enterprising business man, with £40,000, and a trained mind. His money he did not wisely husband; but his mind he used to the glory of himself and to the betterment of his fellow men.

II. In Lancaster county he found a wife, and in Lancaster county he invested a large part of his fortune. Living at first in Philadelphia, and later in this city, he had a social and business prestige well in keeping with his station in life.

III. His house was a marvel of colonial enterprise and lavish appointments. The details of its erection in 1763-65, the plan of life inaugurated in it, and the open-hearted hospitality of the owner, are matters familiar to the people of this Commonwealth. There are a few facts in his life that seem to be worthy of note on this memorial day.

IV. He loved music. True to his German ancestry there coursed through his being a warm, sympathetic stream of rhythmic life. No people of the colony so grasped the meaning of song as a quickener of religious and patriotic life as did the German. The German sang as no other pioneer sang. His "Psalterspiel" was his daily companion, and his passion for music had much to do with conserving the simple elements of his national life. One needs only to recall the unrivalled music of the Ephrata German Society to realize how song became the dominant force in holding together an otherwise incongruous group of ideals. The music of the "Wunderspiel" was written by these Germans in four, six and even seven part harmony. Their music attracted visitors from two continents, and gave the hearer a fore-

taste of bliss supernal, for they sang as they devoutly believed the angels sang in heaven.

V. He was a devout churchman. In his own house was an altar from which he taught his workmen the deeper meanings of the soul's life. It is, perhaps, a unique picture in history to see Baron Stiegel, rich in piety and in influence, busy with the cares of great industrial concerns, summon his workmen to his own palatial home, preach to them the Gospel of Light, and send them away edified and comforted. How much this meant in his day we now can scarcely comprehend. It was nobly grand and grandly noble. The torch lighted in wilderness America by such sturdy servants of God as Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg was held aloft by Baron Stiegel, and by its flame walked trusting men and women until their glad eyes saw the land of perennial light. All honor to the sterling souls who loved righteousness and who

"Allured to brighter worlds
And led the way."

We meet on consecrated ground. The Christian beneficence of a good man hallows this spot. With a benevolence born of a pious purpose this ground was set aside for religious worship. The gift was great. The giver was greater. The blessing is greatest! In the memory of the benefaction how touchingly tender was the tribute exacted—"One red rose." Picture 1773, a small house of worship, a curiously-reverent congregation, a grateful parish, a happy, holy hour. Baron Stiegel walks to the front and receives his annual honorarium, one red rose. What does it mean? Other charitably disposed persons made demands as intrinsically small. Samuel Bond and Ann, his wife, of Lower Melford township, Bucks county, Pa., on January 2,

1745-6, gave to Thomas Blackledge the use of 102 acres of ground for the annual rental of "one peppercorn annually if the same be lawfully demanded," and John Reeser and Catharine, his wife, on the 16th day of August, 1754, gave to Christian Smith three acres of ground in said county for the "rent of one grain of good and merchantable winter wheat yearly forever, if the same shall be lawfully demanded."

But Baron Stiegel asks for "one red rose." This alone is the romance of Christian philanthropy. To him the rose was the symbol of love. As he gave so he would receive. Around his own home, and around the homes of his German friends, bloomed the fairest flower of June time, the rose. It had sweetened his boyhood days in Baden. It is now the choicest memento of his heart when he counted his three-score and three years.

Manheim should be the rose city of America. Plant around your homes, your churches, your schools, the fragrant favorite of your founder. Reverence and honor your ancestral line by planting this beautiful bush, that annually in your midst may burst forth the flowering banners of fragrant memorial, and so shall you honor, so shall you commemorate a worthy and public-spirited pioneer, and so shall you exalt and refine the lives of your children and keep fragrant in their memories the life of the many-sided man in whose memory we gather to-day and from whose life we may gather much to enrich and to exalt our own lives.

Baron Stiegel was an industrial king. He not only developed the iron industry of the colony, but he established the great glass industry of America. In all this he was truly German. No nation to-day, our own excepted, has such remarkable indus-

trial development as Germany. "Made in Germany" is not only the brand of good wares, but of rapidly multiplying products in every great market of the world. The Pennsylvania German came to the colony an agriculturist and a manufacturer. He was, and is, the typical farmer of America. He is incomparably great on the free soil of the American farm. He is also the great textile manufacturer of America. His looms and his spindles sing the music of thrift and of unequalled prosperity.

When Baron Stiegel was financially poor, he was yet rich—rich in goodwill and in high devotion to his fellow man. He became a teacher. In the school-room he identified himself with that large class of noble men and women who build the race's ideals in its childhood, and who give to the world the largest honorarium it receives.

Honor then the man of pioneer days who touched this community, and, through it, the entire country, at many points, and touched it always to bless and to enrich and to ennable. May we, who were born within the State he helped to make, labor to make as large an impress upon our times and upon our fellows as did he. May it not be said of us, as it was said of the New Englander of to-day by one of her most gifted sons:

"We're scarce our fathers' shadows, cast
at noon."

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